

The ‘Aqīdah of al-Dāraqūṭnī (306–385)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

A topic of dispute which has recently been in discussion online concerns the true creed of Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. ‘Umar al-Dāraqūṭnī al-Shafī‘ī (d. 385); was he *Ash‘arī* or *Atharī* inclined? Those who contend that he agreed with the *Ashā‘irah* often cite the following incident involving al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Dāraqūṭnī and his student, Abū Dharr al-Harawī (d. 434), wherein the former praises the *Ash‘arī* scholar Abū Bakr al-Bāqillānī (d. 403):

وقال أبو الوليد الباجي في كتاب «اختصار فرق الفقهاء» [...] لقد أخبرني أبو ذر، وكان يميل إلى مذهبه، فسألته: من أين لك هذا؟ فقال: كنت ماشيا ببغداد مع الدارقطني فلقينا القاضي أبا بكر، فالتزمه الشيخ أبو الحسن الدارقطني، وقبل وجهه وعينه. فلما فارقناه قلت: من هذا؟ فقال: هذا إمام المسلمين والمذاب عن المدين القاضي أبو بكر محمد بن الطيب. قال أبو ذر: فن ذلك الوقت تكررت عليه.

Abū al-Walīd al-Bājī [d. 474] said in the book *Ikhtisār firaq al-Fuqahā’*: I was informed by Abū Dharr [al-Harawī], who used to incline towards his [i.e., al-Bāqillānī’s] creed, [when] I asked him, “For which reason have you done this?” So [Abū Dharr al-Harawī] replied, “I was walking in *Baghdād* with al-Dāraqūṭnī when we were met with al-Qāḍī Abū Bakr [al-Bāqillānī], so he [al-Dāraqūṭnī] embraced him and kissed his face and [between] his two eyes. When we had departed from him, I asked him, “Who is this?” So [al-Dāraqūṭnī] said, ‘This is the leader of the Muslims and the defender of the religion: al-Qāḍī Abu Bakr Muḥammad ibn al-Ṭayyib.’” Abū Dharr said, “From that moment, I began to frequently go to him.”¹

Firstly, a scholar praising another doesn’t entail the former’s acceptance of the latter’s creed. Ibn Daqīq al-‘Īd (d. 702)² and Ibn Ḥajar (d. 852)³ both gave substantial praise for Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728), but this obviously does not mean they agreed with his ‘aqīdah!

1 Al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-Islām*, vol. 29, p. 406. I do not believe there is any convincing reason for rejecting this report, as it is corroborated by what is narrated by Ibn ‘Asākir in his *Tārīkh Dimashq*, vol. 37, p. 392.

2 Ibn Nāṣir al-Dimashqī, *al-Radd al-Wāfir*, p. 59

3 *Taqriẓ li-l-Ḥāfiẓ ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī ‘alā-l-Radd al-Wāfir*, p. 12

Secondly, al-Bāqillānī was known in his time for debating and refuting the Christians, and it is likely that this is the reason *Imām* al-Dāraquṭnī praised him. This is indicated by him describing al-Bāqillānī as being a “leader of the Muslims” and “defender of the religion” as this is a clear reference to Abū Bakr al-Bāqillānī’s defence of Islām against the emperor of Rome and on other occasions as well, refuting the objections raised by Christians⁴ & other groups. This is not the same as, for instance, describing al-Bāqillānī as being “the *Imām* of Ahl al-Sunnah.” Such a description would imply acceptance of his creed, whereas al-Dāraquṭnī had praised him in terms that do not imply this.

It is true that in another wording of this encounter, al-Dāraquṭnī praised al-Bāqillānī by saying, “This is the sword of the Sunnah: Abu Bakr [al-Bāqillānī], the *Ash‘arī*,”⁵ and this does admittedly indicate acceptance of his ‘*aqīdah*. However, because the *isnād* of this strange wording is questionable and includes unnamed narrators, precedence is to be given to the account cited earlier recorded directly by Abū al-Walīd al-Bājī in his book.

Thirdly, can we actually confirm that *Imām* Abū al-Ḥasan al-Dāraquṭnī was even aware of the ‘*aqīdah* held by al-Bāqillānī? There is reason to question this, since we have the work of *Imām* Abū Naṣr al-Sijzī (d. 444) wherein he described al-Bāqillānī as hiding his ‘*aqīdah* and praising *Imām* Aḥmad alongside other adherents to *Ahl al-Ḥadīth*.⁶ *Imām* al-Dhahabī also described al-Bāqillānī as defending the methodology of *Ahl al-Ḥadīth* and the *Ḥanābilah*, despite him (inwardly) also opposing them in some matters.⁷

In other words, al-Bāqillānī seems to have been uninterested in making his *kalāmī* creed known. It is the debates he had with the Christians which the masses knew; the *Khalīfah* of ‘*Irāq* had sent him to Constantinople for that purpose! Common knowledge about al-Bāqillānī at the time particularly concerned his opposition to the *kuffār* and deviant sects, since he outwardly displayed to the general public no more than this.

4 Relevant words are found in al-Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ’s *Tartīb al-Madārik*, vol. 7, p. 57 onwards.

5 Ibn ‘Asākir, *Tārīkh Dimashq*, vol. 37, p. 392

6 Abū Naṣr al-Sijzī, *al-Radd ‘alā man ankar al-Ḥarf wa-l-Ṣawt*, pp. 305–306

7 Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, vol. 17, p. 558

The reason *al-Ḥāfiẓ* al-Dāraquṭnī praised Abū Bakr al-Bāqillānī would therefore only be due to these positive efforts that were well known about him, not because al-Dāraquṭnī agreed with the specifics of al-Bāqillānī's *ʿaqīdah*. This was stated by al-Dhahabī.⁸ *Al-Qāḍī* al-Bāqillānī's inward beliefs and deep involvement with *ʿilm al-kalām* was very likely not known except to those people who discussed or sat with him. We have no reason to believe *Imām* al-Dāraquṭnī was from these few people, and to the contrary, we have reason to believe the opposite.

قال الحافظ أبو عبد الرحمن السلمي في السؤالات: وسمعت الشيخ أبا الحسن يقول: ما في الدنيا شيء أبغض إلي من الكلام.

Al-Ḥāfiẓ Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī (d. 412) reported in *al-Suʿālāt*, “I heard *al-Shaykh* Abū al-Ḥasan [al-Dāraquṭnī] say, ‘Nothing is more hateful to me than *kalām* [theological rhetoric].”⁹

On the one hand al-Dāraquṭnī detested *kalām*, whereas on the other hand one cannot deny that al-Bāqillānī was a very learned *mutakallim*!¹⁰ Although we may differ on what “*kalām*” means,¹¹ it is safe to say no real *Ashʿarī* would utter al-Dāraquṭnī's words here.

Fourthly, we find that *Imām* al-Dāraquṭnī had also praised the strict *Atharī* scholars; he viewed Abū Bakr ibn Khuzaymah (d. 311), for example, as being a firm *Imām*.¹² There is also one other mention in this regard occurring in *Suʿālāt al-Sulamī*:

قال الحافظ أبو عبد الرحمن السلمي في السؤالات: وسألته عن الأزهرى؟ فقال: هو أحمد بن محمد بن الأزهر بن حريث، وهو سيجستانيء منكر الحديث، إلا أنه بلغني أن محمد بن إسحاق بن خزيمة حسن الرأي فيهء وكفى بهذا نفرا!

Al-Ḥāfiẓ Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī said in *al-Suʿālāt*, “And I asked him regarding al-Azhārī, so he [i.e., al-Dāraquṭnī] answered, ‘He is Aḥmad b.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ *Suʿālāt al-Sulamī*, p. 357, and *Imām* al-Dhahabī authenticated it in *al-Siyar*, vol. 17, p. 457.

¹⁰ To stress this point (although I probably don't need to), al-Ṣaffadī (d. 764) states in *al-Wāfi*, vol. 3, p. 47, “Abu Bakr al-Bāqillānī al-Baṣrī: [he was] the author of multiple works pertaining to *ʿilm al-kalām*.”

¹¹ But as a side point, *al-Ḥāfiẓ* Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī (al-Dāraquṭnī's student) was known to have cursed *Ahl al-Kalām* such as the *Kullābiyyah*. Al-Harawī, *Dhamm al-Kalām*, vol. 4, p. 409.

¹² *Suʿālāt al-Sulamī*, p. 101

Muḥammad b. al-Azhar b. Ḥurayth, and he was *Sijistānī*. [He is] rejected in *ḥadīth*, but it has reached me that Muḥammad ibn Ishāq ibn Khuzaymah had a good opinion of him, and that is sufficient for him as pride!”¹³

Thus, it is clear that al-Dāraquṭnī was very fond of Ibn Khuzaymah, the adherence of whom to *Athariyyah* is indisputable.¹⁴ If one were to use this to argue al-Dāraquṭnī was *Atharī* rather than *Ash‘arī*, however, an *Ash‘arī* would surely object, “But his praise for Ibn Khuzaymah is not in ‘*aqīdah*, it’s merely in terms of being a *muḥaddith*!” This would necessitate that he can no longer cling onto the “Bāqillānī praise” argument without maintaining a double standard; it is simply just as (if not considerably more) plausible that al-Dāraquṭnī’s praise for al-Bāqillānī was likewise unrelated to his ‘*aqīdah*.

Fifthly, one other scholar we can take into consideration when addressing this issue is Abū al-Faḍl al-Tamīmī (d. 410), whose situation resembles that of al-Dāraquṭnī.

Abū al-Faḍl al-Tamīmī was al-Bāqillānī’s companion¹⁵ while simultaneously not only affirming that Allāh speaks with letter (*ḥarf*) and sound (*ṣawṭ*), but he even stated none of the scholars ever held that the words of the Qur’ān are a created expression.¹⁶ He declared this view to be a misguided innovation, despite the fact that it is precisely what al-Bāqillānī (his companion) had believed!¹⁷ This further bolsters the point at hand: if al-Tamīmī’s friendship with al-Bāqillānī did not entail an agreement in creed between the two, it is even less likely to be the case between him and al-Dāraquṭnī.

Ultimately, we cannot definitively determine whether *Imām* al-Dāraquṭnī agreed with the *Ashā‘irah* without proof that transcends merely appealing to his praise for certain scholars or pointing out that some of his students were from the *mutakallimīn*. The real question is: What did al-Dāraquṭnī *himself* say with respect to ‘*aqīdah*?

The creedal works which were authored by al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Dāraquṭnī include *Kitāb al-Ṣifāt*, *Kitāb al-Nuzūl*, and *Kitāb al-Ru’yah*. Many attempt now to cast doubt upon these books

13 Ibid., p. 128

14 The evidence for this is simply *Imām* Ibn Khuzaymah’s *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd* (and the frequent claim that Ibn Khuzaymah repented from this book is a ridiculous belief which nobody has held until recently).

15 Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, vol. 13, p. 58

16 Abū al-Faḍl al-Tamīmī, *I‘tiqād al-Imām al-Munabbal*, pp. 33, 36

17 This is proven by what al-Bāqillānī says in his works, such as *al-Inṣāf*, ed. al-Azhariyyah, p. 92.

for being narrated via Abū al-‘Izz ibn Kādish (d. 526)¹⁸ because he was said to have mixed up when narrating and was even accused of lying by Ibn al-Najjār!¹⁹ This accusation is misplaced, however, as Ibn Kādish repented from fabrication.²⁰ Ibn Nāṣir’s negative opinion of Ibn Kādish was also seemingly based largely on his fabrications,²¹ but (as aforementioned) he eventually repented in any case. Also, al-Ḥafīẓ Ibn ‘Asākir upheld Ibn Kādish’s reliability in response to one of Ibn Nāṣir’s statements.²²

The only other criticism against Ibn Kādish we know of was that he was accused by ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Anmāṭī for “mixing up.”²³ However, it is known that in respect to transmitting books from their authors, memory and precision in narration is not an issue (all that is required is to be able to read the book, not to memorise it).²⁴

With that being said, Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597) had words of praise for Abū al-‘Izz ibn Kādish, and likewise did Ibn al-Kaššāb (d. 567).²⁵ Further, Al-Ḥafīẓ b. ‘Asākir (d. 571) defended Ibn Kādish and stated that his transmission is authentic in *samā‘āt* (i.e., public gatherings of a book’s reading),²⁶ with Ibn al-Sam‘ānī (d. 562) also speaking to this effect.²⁷ Since Ibn Kādish’s transmission of *Imām* al-Dāraquṭnī’s books would take place in *samā‘āt* (with Ibn ‘Asākir himself transmitting creedal works of al-Dāraquṭnī via Ibn Kādish),²⁸ there remains no convincing reason to doubt the authenticity of these books.

Moreover, we find that Ibn Kādish was not alone in his transmission. *Kitāb al-Nuzūl* was transmitted not only by Ibn Kādish, but it was also reported via another chain.²⁹ Likewise, Ibn Kādish was corroborated in regards to al-Dāraquṭnī’s *Kitāb al-Ru‘yah*³⁰ and also

18 He transmitted both *Kitāb al-Ṣifāt* and *Kitāb al-Ru‘yah* from al-‘Ushārī, from al-Dāraquṭnī.

19 Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, vol. 19, p. 559

20 Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Lisān al-Mizān*, vol. 1, p. 218

21 Al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-Islām*, vol. 36, p. 142

22 Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, vol. 19, p. 559

23 Ibid.

24 Related details are found in Shaykh Nāsir Āl Mut‘ib’s work, *Daf‘ al-Shukūk wa-l-Awhām*, p. 15 onwards.

25 Al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-Islām*, vol. 36, p. 142

26 Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, vol. 19, p. 559

27 Al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-Islām*, vol. 36, p. 142

28 More details regarding Ibn Kādish’s book transmission are cited by Ibn Ḥajar in *al-Lisān*, vol. 1, p. 218.

29 This other chain was used by al-Faqīhī in his *taḥqīq* of *Kitāb al-Nuzūl*.

30 This was demonstrated in *taḥqīq* of the 1411 A.H. (1990 C.E.) print of *Kitāb al-Ru‘yah*, pp. 86–87.

his *Kitāb al-Ṣifāt*.³¹ What's more, the *shuyūkh* which al-Dāraqūṭnī narrated from in these three books can be confirmed to be his teachers, and the *mutūn* (texts) of the *aḥādīth* in al-Dāraqūṭnī's creedal works correspond to their *mutūn* found in other books.³²

Once the authenticity of these three works are proven, we can take into consideration the fact that their contents make apparent *Imām* al-Dāraqūṭnī was an uncompromising *Atharī* on the topic of *al-Asmā' wa-l-Ṣifāt* (the names and attributes of Allāh).

From his *Kitāb al-Ṣifāt*, we find that *Imām* al-Dāraqūṭnī affirmed attributes including the two Feet (*al-Qadamayn*), Hand (*al-Yad*), Fingers (*al-Aṣābi'*), Face (*al-Wajh*), and laughter (*al-ḍaḥik*) among other *khavarī Ṣifāt*.³³ This, however, will not be entirely sufficient, as it could easily be claimed that al-Dāraqūṭnī was upon *tafwīḍ al-ma'nā* and that his mere narration of these *aḥādīth* does not demonstrate otherwise.

Those who claim that *al-Hāfiẓ* al-Dāraqūṭnī was a *mufawwiḍ* of the meanings of the *Ṣifāt* would likely appeal to him narrating from Wakī' b. al-Jarrāḥ (d. 196):

حدثنا محمد بن مخلد، ثنا العباس بن محمد الدوري، قال: سمعت يحيى بن معين يقول:
شهدت زكرياء بن عدي يسأل، وكيف؟ فقال: يا أبا سفيان إن هذه الأحاديث يعني مثل
الكرسي موضع القدمين، ونحو هذا. فقال وكيع: أدركنا إسماعيل بن أبي خالد، وسفيان
ومسعرًا يحدثون بهذه الأحاديث ولا يفسرون شيئاً.

Regarding the *aḥādīth* pertaining to the *Ṣifāt*, such as the *Kursī* being the place of *al-Qadamayn* (the two Feet), Wakī' ibn al-Jarrāḥ said, "We encountered Ismā'īd ibn Abī Khālid and Sufyān [al-Thawrī] and Mis'ar narrating these *aḥādīth*, and they did not explain anything."³⁴

The claim here is that "and they did not explain anything" is a reference to them not explaining the meanings of the *Ṣifāt*. This understanding, however, is rebutted by the

31 A captivating overview in this regard is found [here](#).

32 There is still the claim that Abū Ṭalib al-ʿUshārī (who Ibn Kādīsh transmitted from) himself was also weak, but the little criticism about his mistakes hold no weight in regards to the transmission of a book. The scholars who praised and authenticated him are a multitude, and a detailed defence of al-ʿUshārī's reliability in narration (although not necessary for transmitting a book) is found [here](#), pp. 26–27. Note that *Imām* al-ʿUshārī was also corroborated on multiple occasions regarding these books.

33 This is seen throughout his *Kitāb al-Ṣifāt*, ed. al-Faqīhī, pp. 25–65.

34 Al-Dāraqūṭnī, *Kitāb al-Ṣifāt*, p. 69

context, since Wakīʿ b. al-Jarrāḥ (if we refer to the full Arabic version above) only said this in response to being asked “How?” Hence, “they did not explain anything” refers only to not explaining the howness, not that they did *tafwīḍ* of the *maʿnā*. What further supports this is the fact that before he narrated this from Wakīʿ, *Imām* al-Daraqūṭnī mentioned al-Qāsim ibn Sallām (d. 224) saying, “When it is asked, ‘How does Allāh place His Foot? How does Allāh laugh?’ Then we reply, ‘That [i.e., the howness] is not to be explained, and we have not heard anyone explain this.’”³⁵ It is clear based on this that when *al-Ḥāfiẓ* al-Dāraqūṭnī alluded to the prohibition of explaining the *Ṣifāt*, this is only prohibition of explaining the howness (*kayf*), not of explaining the meaning (*maʿnā*).

What demonstrates that *Imām* al-Daraqūṭnī was in fact upon *ithbāt* rather than *tafwīḍ* is what *Imām* Abū al-Qāsim al-Lālakāʿī (d. 418) reported in *al-Sunnah*:

وجدت بخط أبي الحسن الدارقطني رحمه الله، عن إسحاق الهادي، قال: سمعت أبا العباس ثعلبا يقول: [...] ﴿استوى على العرش﴾: علا.

I saw [this report] in the writing of Abū al-Ḥasan al-Dāraqūṭnī, may Allāh have mercy on him: from Ishāq al-Kādhī, who said: I heard Abū al-ʿAbbās Taʿlab say, “‘He *istawā* above the Throne’ [7:54], He ascended [*ʿalā*].”³⁶

This denotes that similar to al-Lālakāʿī, *Imām* al-Dāraqūṭnī also understood *al-istiwaʿ* to mean that Allāh ascended (*ʿalā*) above the Throne, thus demonstrating that he was not a *mufawwiḍ*. *Imām* al-Dāraqūṭnī also narrated:

حدثنا محمد بن مخلد، ثنا محمد بن محمد بن عمر بن الحكم أبو الحسن ابن العطار، قال: سمعت محمد بن مصعب العابد يقول: من زعم أنك لا تتكلم ولا ترى في الآخرة، فهو كافر بوجهك ولا يعرفك، أشهد أنك فوق العرش فوق سبع سماوات، وليس كما يقول أعداؤك الزنادقة.

Muḥammad ibn Muṣʿab al-ʿĀbid [d. 228] said, “Whoever claims that You do not speak and [that You] will not be seen in the Hereafter, then he is a disbeliever in Your Face and does not know You. I bear witness that You

35 Ibid., and it is an authentic narration.

36 Al-Lālakāʿī, *Sharḥ Uṣūl Iʿtiqād*, vol. 3, p. 443. Its narrators are reliable.

are above the Throne and over the seven heavens [*fawq al-‘arsh fawq sab‘ samāwāt*], contrary to what your enemies—the heretics—say.”³⁷

This narration also shows *Imām* al-Dāraquṭnī’s affirmation of *al-‘Uluww*, and to contend otherwise would simply digress to ad-hoc argumentation.

What indicates that al-Dāraquṭnī affirmed the apparent meanings of the *Ṣifāt* is that he had no issue in narrating some *aḥādīth* which the *Ashā‘irah* would likely object to. One example is *Imām* al-Dāraquṭnī narrating a *ḥadīth* affirming a *Kaff* (Palm) for Allāh while proving that Allāh has a *Yamīn* (Right Hand).³⁸ Al-Dāraquṭnī likewise narrated *aḥādīth* on the *hubūṭ* (coming down) of Allāh to prove His *nuzūl* (descent).³⁹ How did he deduce a correlation between *al-hubūṭ* and *al-nuzūl* if their meanings were unknown?

Moreover, *al-Ḥafīẓ* al-Dāraquṭnī narrated the *ḥadīth* which describes Allāh as coming down to the lowest heaven and **remaining as such**⁴⁰ until the break of dawn, **when He ascends to the heaven!**⁴¹ This would strike any *Ash‘arī* as being anthropomorphic, but al-Dāraquṭnī described the wording “then, He ascends” as being a *ziyādah ḥasnaah* (good addition)!⁴² He accepted this *ziyādah* despite most *aḥādīth* of *al-nuzūl* excluding it.

Similarly, *Imām* al-Dāraquṭnī narrated the disputed *ḥadīth* in which the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) saw Allāh in the image of a young man.⁴³ Some of the scholars have accepted this narration while others have renounced it.⁴⁴ Rather than

37 Al-Dāraquṭnī, *Kitāb al-Ṣifāt*, p. 73. *Shaykh* al-Albānī authenticated its *isnād*.

38 Ibid., 67–68

39 Al-Dāraquṭnī, *Kitāb al-Nuzūl*, ed. al-Faqīhī, pp. 99, 132, 133, 153–154, 167

40 Ibn Muḥibb al-Ṣāmit (d. 789) narrated from al-Dāraquṭnī with the following wording: “He comes down to this heaven [...] **and that remains His place [makān]** until each dawn breaks [...] then, He ascends to the heaven.” Ibn Muḥibb, *Kitāb al-Ṣifāt*, vol. 2, pp. 552–533; “*makān*” is also affirmed in *Kitāb al-Nuzūl*, p. 96.

41 Al-Dāraquṭnī, *Kitāb al-Nuzūl*, p. 133

42 Ibid., Ibn Muḥibb, *Kitāb al-Ṣifāt*, vol. 2, p. 533

43 Al-Dāraquṭnī, *Kitāb al-Ru‘yah*, p. 358

44 Some of those who accepted it, like al-Qāḍī Abū Ya‘lā (d. 458), argued that it should be understood in a non-anthropomorphic way, the same way we understand the *aḥādīth* regarding *al-Yad* and *al-Wajh*. Others, such as *Imām* al-Dārimī (d. 280), rejected this *ḥadīth* altogether in his *Naqḍ ‘alā al-Marīsī*.

rejecting it, however, *Imām al-Dāraquṭnī* cited *Abū Zur‘ah al-Rāzī* (d. 264) speaking of this report and its narrators in positive terms!⁴⁵

Furthermore, we find that in his *Kitāb al-Ṣifāt*, *al-Ḥafīẓ al-Dāraquṭnī* has a section where he reports the *aḥādīth* describing the Throne as creaking with Allah mounting upon it!⁴⁶ Never does *al-Dāraquṭnī* oppose it nor speak against it, which this indicates he had no objections to its meaning (and perhaps neither to its authenticity).

The many likes of these examples and *aḥādīth* which clarify *al-Dāraquṭnī*’s true ‘*aqīdah*’ led even *Ibn Jamā‘ah* (d. 728), the *Ash‘arī Qāḍī*, to speak against him in this regard.⁴⁷ There are also the following lines of poetry reported from him:

أنشدنا الحافظ أبو الحجاج يوسف بن خليل الدمشقي بن خليل الحافظ المفيد من لفظه أنبا
أبو القاسم بن بوش، أنبا أبو العز أحمد بن عبيد الله بن كادش، أنشدنا أبو طالب محمد بن
علي الحري، أنشدنا الإمام أبو الحسن علي بن عمر الدارقطني، رحمه الله قال:

إلى أحمد المصطفى نسند	حديث الشفاعة في أحمد
العرش أيضا فلا نجده	فأما حديث بإقعاده على
ولا تدخلوا فيه ما يفسده	أمرو الحديث على وجهه
ولا تجحدوا أنه يقعه	ولا تنكروا أنه قاعد

Imām Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī ibn ‘Umar al-Dāraquṭnī, may Allāh have mercy on him, said, “The ḥadīth of the intercession by Aḥmad—we narrated it with *isnād* to Aḥmad *al-Muṣṭafā* [the peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him]. As for the ḥadīth regarding him [i.e., the Prophet] being seated upon the Throne, then that as well we do not reject. Pass along [*amirrū*] the ḥadīth upon its apparent, and do not delve into that which corrupts. And do not deny that He [i.e., Allāh] is seated [upon the Throne], and do not reject that He will seat him [i.e., the Prophet] [as well].”⁴⁸

45 Ibid.

46 *Al-Dāraquṭnī*, *Kitāb al-Ṣifāt*, pp. 48–49, 50–51, 52–53

47 Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Jamā‘ah, *Īdāḥ al-Dalīl*, p. 233

48 *Al-Dashtī*, *Ithbāt al-Ḥadd*, ed. Āl Ḥamadān, pp. 261–262

In these lines of poetry, *Imām* al-Dāraquṭnī affirms *qu‘ūd* (sitting) for Allāh! However, it is notable that the authenticity of this report is disputed; *Shaykh* al-Albānī weakened it on the basis of the weakness of Ibn Kādish (who transmitted this from al-‘Ushārī, from al-Dāraquṭnī) which ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Anmāṭī had attributed to him.⁴⁹ *Shaykh* ‘Ādil Āl Ḥamadān responded by mentioning that not only were these lines of poetry accepted by Al-Dhahabī, Ibn al-Qayyim, and Sulaymān ibn Saḥmān regardless, but Abū Ya‘lā also reported this⁵⁰ from his *shaykh*, al-‘Ushārī, who heard it from al-Dāraquṭnī, thus proving that these lines were reported via other than Ibn Kādish as well.⁵¹ Allāh knows best.

As for the fact that *Imām* al-Dāraquṭnī had some *Ash‘arī* students—Abū Dharr al-Harawī in particular—then we do not deny this. What caused Abu Dharr to become *Ash‘arī* was what he witnessed of al-Dāraquṭnī’s praise for al-Bāqillānī⁵² (although this itself does not prove al-Dāraquṭnī was an *Ash‘arī*, as has preceded). What most likely occurred was that al-Dāraquṭnī’s praise, despite being unrelated to *‘aqidah*, led Abū Dharr al-Harawī to begin sitting with al-Bāqillānī and to eventually be affected by his creed. Notably, Abū Dharr had never attributed his later *‘aqidah* to al-Dāraquṭnī.

Nevertheless, it was also the case that many of al-Dāraquṭnī’s students were very firm *Atharīs*. One example is his close student, *al-Shaykh* Abū Ḥāmid al-Isfrāyīnī (d. 406), who heard *al-Sunan*⁵³ from *Imām* al-Dāraquṭnī.⁵⁴ Abū Ḥāmid al-Isfrāyīnī was known to be an harsh opponent of Abū Bakr al-Bāqillānī,⁵⁵ and Abū Ḥāmid said:

مذهبي ومذهب الشافعي وفقهاء الأمصار أن القرآن كلام الله غير مخلوق ومن قال: مخلوق فهو كافر [...] وكل حرف منه كالباء والتاء كله كلام الله غير مخلوق ومن قال: مخلوق فهو كافر عليه لعائن الله والناس أجمعين.

“My methodology and that of al-Shāfi‘ī [d. 204] and [that of] the scholars across the lands is that the Qur’ān is the Speech of Allāh, not created.

49 Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī, *Silsilah al-Aḥādīth al-Ḍa‘īfah*, vol. 2, p. 256

50 Abū Ya‘lā al-Farrā‘, *Ibtāl al-Ta‘wīlāt*, ed. al-Gharās, p. 532

51 The first footnote on *Ithbāt al-Ḥadd*, ed. Āl Ḥamadān, p. 262

52 Ibn ‘Asākir, *Tārīkh Dimashq*, vol. 37, p. 392

53 It is printed today in 5–6 volumes.

54 Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, vol. 17, p. 194

55 Al-Harawī, *Dhamm al-Kalām*, vol. 4, p. 408

And whoever says it is created, then he is a disbeliever [...] and ever letter of it—such as the *bāʾ* and the *tāʾ*—all of it this the uncreated Speech of Allāh. Whoever says they are created, then he is a disbeliever upon whom be the curse of Allāh and [the curse of] mankind altogether.”⁵⁶

Imām Abū Ḥāmid al-Isfrāyīnī’s attribution of this belief to the scholars (*fuqahāʾ*) across the lands would very likely include his own *shaykh*, *Imām* al-Dāraqūṭnī. Because we find Abū Ḥāmid would also often make mention of his opposition to al-Bāqillānī regarding the Qurʾān’s uncreated nature,⁵⁷ this in turn implies (alongside all the other cumulative evidence) that al-Dāraqūṭnī would also disagree with al-Bāqillānī on this issue.

Another student of al-Dāraqūṭnī was *al-Ḥāfiẓ* Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī (d. 412). He narrated lots from his teacher in his *Suʾālāt*, including the aforementioned statement in

which *Imām* al-Dāraqūṭnī said, “Nothing is more hateful to me than *kalām* [theological rhetoric].”⁵⁸ Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī also has a work dedicated to the censure of ʿilm al-*kalām*,⁵⁹ and Abū Ismāʿīl al-Harawī (d. 481) reported:

سمعت أحمد بن أبي نصر يقول: رأينا محمد بن الحسين السلي يلعن الكلامية.

“I heard Aḥmad ibn Abī Naṣr say, ‘We found Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Sulamī [i.e., Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān] cursing the *Kullābiyyah*.’”⁶⁰

Al-Sulamī also stated, “I saw Abū Ḥāmid al-Isfrāyīnī, Abū al-Ṭayyib al-Ṣuʿlūkī, Abū Bakr al-Qaffāl, and Abū Manṣūr al-Ḥakīm [all] upon rejection of *kalām* and its adherents.”⁶¹

Lastly, among *Imām* al-Dāraqūṭnī’s students was *Imām* al-Ḥakīm al-Naysābūrī (d. 405), who also narrated many statements from him in his *Suʾālāt*. I find it truly unfortunate how it is often said that he was an *Ashʿarī*, as was claimed by Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī (d. 771), although he did not bring any evidence except that *Imām* al-Ḥakīm took from *Ashʿarī*

56 Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmūʿ al-Fatāwā*, vol. 12, p. 306

57 Ibn Taymiyyah, *Darʾ Taʿaruf al-ʿAql wa-l-Naql*, 2/96

58 *Suʾālāt al-Sulamī*, p. 357, and *Imām* al-Dhahabī authenticated it in *al-Siyar*, vol. 16, p. 457.

59 It is titled *Aḥādīth fī Dhamm al-Kalām wa Ahlih*, printed 1418 A.H. (1996 C.E.).

60 Al-Harawī, *Dhamm al-Kalām*, vol. 4, p. 409. The *Kullābiyyah* were the precursors to the *Ashʿarīrah*.

61 Ibid., vol. 4, p. 407, and it is authentic.

scholars such as Abū Bakr al-Ṣibghī (d. 342),⁶² Abu Bakr Ibn Fūrak (d. 406), and Abū Sahl al-Ṣuʿlūkī (d. 368).⁶³ This is not very convincing, however, since not only was al-Ḥakīm's interaction with Ibn Fūrak apparently limited,⁶⁴ but Abū Bakr al-Ṣibghī himself refutes Ibn Fūrak's creed! Al-Ḥakīm transmitted from *Imām* al-Ṣibghī that he declared anyone who performs *taʿwīl* of the *nuzūl* (descent) of Allāh to mean His command's descent is a misguided innovator,⁶⁵ whereas these *taʿwīlāt* are precisely what Ibn Fūrak argued for in his works!⁶⁶ *Imām* al-Ḥakīm's transmission also includes Abū Bakr al-Ṣibghī describing as *Jahmīs* those who understand *al-istiwaʿ* above the Throne to mean domination,⁶⁷ while this *taʿwīl* was instead mentioned favourably by Ibn Fūrak.⁶⁸ So either al-Ḥakīm simultaneously held contradictory *ʿaqāʿid*, or he simply disagreed with Ibn Fūrak here.

We also see that al-Ḥakīm approvingly narrated Ibn Khuzaymah's affirmation of Allāh's *ʿUluww* (Ascendancy),⁶⁹ which denotes that they were in agreement on this issue. *Shaykh al-Islām* Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728) similarly said that al-Ḥakīm agreed with Ibn Khuzaymah that Allāh speaks when He wills.⁷⁰ *Imām* al-Dhahabī even suggested that al-Ḥakīm had *Karrāmī* inclinations⁷¹ based on his speaking highly of Muḥammad ibn Karrām (d. 255).⁷² So it is no surprise *Imām* Ibn al-Mibrad al-Ḥanbalī (d. 909) described as a fabrication the inclusion of al-Ḥakīm among the *Ashāʿirah*, and he denounced Ibn ʿAsākir for doing so.⁷³ Rather, *al-Ḥāfiẓ* Ibn Ḥajar confirmed that al-Ḥakīm's approach to

62 Whether or not al-Ṣibghī was an *Ashʿarī* is disputable.

63 Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfiʿiyyah al-Kubrā*, vol. 4, p. 162

64 Al-Dhahabī said (*al-Siyar*, vol. 17, p. 216) that al-Ḥakīm transmitted only a single *ḥadīth* from Ibn Fūrak.

65 Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar Aʿlām al-Nubalāʾ*, 14, p. 381

66 Ibn Fūrak, *Mushkil al-Ḥadīth wa Bayānuh*, pp. 471–472

67 Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar Aʿlām al-Nubalāʾ*, 14, p. 381

68 Ibn Fūrak, *Mushkil al-Ḥadīth wa Bayānuh*, p. 459

69 Al-Ḥakīm, *Maʿrifah ʿUlūm al-Ḥadīth*, pp. 83–84

70 Ibn Taymiyyah, *Darʿ Taʿāruḍ al-ʿAql wa-l-Naql*, vol. 2, pp. 9–10

71 Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar Aʿlām al-Nubalāʾ*, vol. 13, p. 299

72 Al-Dhahabī, *Tārikh al-Islām*, vol. 27, p. 61

73 Ibn al-Mibrad, *Jamʿ al-Juyūsh wa-l-Dasākir*, ed. Dār al-Dhakhāʾir, p. 341

the *ṣifāt* of Allāh was the same as that of Ibn Qutaybah al-Dīnawarī (d. 276),⁷⁴ and Ibn al-Mibrad likewise described *Imām* al-Ḥākim as instead opposing the *Ashā'irah*.⁷⁵

And Abū Bakr al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (d. 463) said about al-Dāraqūṭnī:

انتهى إليه علم الأثر، والمعرفة بعلم الحديث، وأسماء الرجال، وأحوال الرواة، مع الصدق والأمانة، والثقة والعدالة، وقبول الشهادة، وصحة الاعتقاد، وسلامة المذهب.

“Knowledge of the narrations, the *ḥadīths*’ [hidden] defects, the names of the people, and the conditions of narrators ended with him. He was with truthfulness and credibility, trustworthiness and balance, acceptability of testimony, correctness of creed [*al-i’tiqād*], and soundness of *maḏhab*.”⁷⁶

The only other scholar regarding whom al-Ḥafīẓ al-Khaṭīb used the exact words “*ṣaḥāh al-i’tiqād*” was *Amīr al-Mu’minīn* al-Qādir bi-Allāh (d. 422),⁷⁷ the *Atharī* ruler.⁷⁸ This implies

that according to al-Khaṭīb,⁷⁹ these two were in agreement in regards to creed.

74 Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Lisān al-Mizān*, vol. 3, p. 359. Ibn Qutaybah was from the students of *Imām* Aḥmad who affirmed the *ṣifāt* according to the methodology of *Ahl al-Ḥadīth*, as is seen in his refutation upon the *Jahmiyyah* amongst his other works. For example, in his *Ta’wīl Mukhtalif al-Ḥadīth*, p. 394, Ibn Qutaybah explained the *Āyah* “The Most Merciful *istawā* above the Throne” [20:5] to mean Allāh settled (*istaqarr*) above the Throne, and he also affirmed the *qadr al-mushtarak* when doing so.

75 Ibn al-Mibrad, *Jam‘ al-Juyūsh wa-l-Dasākir*, ed. Dār al-Dhakhā’ir, p. 363

76 Abū Bakr al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Badhdād*, vol. 13, p. 487

77 Ibid., vol. 5, p. 61

78 *Al-Shaykh* al-Qādir bi-Allāh dispersed a creedal treatise titled “*al-I’tiqād al-Qādirī*,” wherein he affirmed that *al-istiṭwā’* above the Throne means *al-istiqrār* (settling) and that all the attributes of Allāh are to be [...]

affirmed upon their real/apparent (*ḥaqīqah*), not as being metaphorical (*majāz*). Ibn al-Qayyim, *al-Ṣawā’iq al-Mursalah*, ed. al-‘Ilmiyyah, vol. 4, p. 1288; Ibn Taymiyyah, *Bayān Talbīs al-Jahmiyyah*, vol. 1, pp. 182–183; and see: al-Dhahabī, *al-‘Uluww li-l-‘Alī al-Ghaffār*, p. 239.

79 *Al-Ḥafīẓ* al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī also affirmed the *ṣifāt* upon their apparent, as al-Dhahabī authentically transmitted in *al-Sīyar*, vol. 18, p. 284. This indicates that al-Khaṭīb’s describing the *ṣawāḥir* as indicating *tashbīh* (Abū Bakr al-Baghdādī, *al-Jāmi‘ li-Akhlāq al-Rāwī*, vol. 2, p. 107) was a former opinion of his from which he retracted. That is because Muḥammad al-Za‘farānī (the one who reported al-Khaṭīb’s affirming the *ṣawāḥir*) was amongst al-Khaṭīb’s later students and was only around twenty when his teacher died, may Allah have mercy on them both. So this was his final view, and Allāh knows best.

And *Imām al-Dhahabī* (d. 748) said:

وصح عن الدارقطني أنه قال: ما شيء أبغض إلي من علم الكلام. قلت: لم يدخل الرجل أبدا في علم الكلام ولا الجدل، ولا خاض في ذلك، بل كان سلفيا.

“It is authentic from al-Dāraqūṭnī that he said, ‘Nothing is more hateful to me than *‘ilm al-kalām.*’ I [al-Dhahabī] say: he never entered into *‘ilm al-kalām* or disputation, nor did he indulge in it. Rather, he was a *Salafī*.”⁸⁰

And *al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Mufasssīr Ibn Kathīr* (d. 774) said:

الحافظ الكبير، أستاذ هذه الصناعة، وقبله بمدة وبعده إلى زماننا هذا، سمع الكثير، وجمع وصنف وألف وأجاد وأفاد، وأحسن النظر والتعليل والانتقاد والاعتقاد.

“[Al-Dāraqūṭnī] was the great *Ḥāfiẓ*, the scholar of this science, [both] for a period before him and [also] after him until this day. He heard abundant [narrations]; he gathered, authored, compiled, and examined, and he was excellent in study, [recognition of] defects, scrutiny, and creed [*i’tiqād*].”⁸¹

Here we see two other *Atharī* scholars (al-Dhahabī & Ibn Kathīr) attributing al-Dāraqūṭnī to the correct *‘aqidah* (which to them could be no other than the *Atharī* creed).⁸²

Finally, *Imām Ibn al-Mibrad al-Ḥanbalī* (d. 909) mentioned in *Jam‘ al-Juyūsh wa-l-Dasākīr* when listing out the scholars from *Ahl al-Ḥadīth*:

ومنهم الإمام أبو الحسن الدارقطني، كان مجانباً لهم، وله كلام في ذمهم.

80 Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, vol. 16, p. 457

81 Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidayah wa-l-Nihāyah*, ed. Dār al-Fikr, vol. 11, p. 317

82 Many have recently claimed that al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr was an *Ash‘arī* because he had been teaching at *Dar al-Ḥadīth al-Ashrafiyyah*, where it was required to be *Ash‘arī* in order to teach. [Although this argument has been refuted repeatedly](#), conceding this for the sake of argument would not be a problem here because it would entail that Ibn Kathīr **became** *Ash‘arī* **after** authoring *al-Bidāyah wa-l-Nihāyah*, [a book in which he clearly maintains a “Taymite” creed](#). It was in this same book that Ibn Kathīr ascribed al-Dāraqūṭnī to the correct *‘aqidah*, so my point stands nevertheless. More information is available [here](#).

“And from [the *Atharī* scholars] was *al-Imām* Abū al-Ḥasan al-Dāraqūṭnī; he was one who turned away from them [i.e., the *Ashāʿirah*], and he had words of condemnation against them.”⁸³

By now it should be clear the *ʿaqīdah* of *Shaykh al-Islām* al-Dāraqūṭnī, praise be to Allāh.

والحمد لله وحده، وصلى الله على سيدنا محمد، وآله وصحبه وسلم

83 Ibn al-Mibrad, *Jamʿ al-Juyūsh wa-l-Ḍasākir*, ed. Dār al-Dhakhāʿir, p. 361